

Vorfreude by The Readers Muse

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Summary: In a world where strong emotion and traumatic experiences could sometimes trigger one to present, she supposed it was a forgone conclusion that Jonathan Byers was going to present as something, early or not.

1. Chapter 1

Disclaimer: I don't own Netflix's "Stranger Things." Everything belongs to whoever owns them, my wishful thinking aside.

Authors Note #1: Because apparently I need to bring the filth into every fandom I go into, honestly. Set shortly after season one in the alpha/beta/omega universe trope. This is my first work in the fandom so tally-ho, I guess.

Disclaimer: adult language, canon appropriate violence, very mild sexual content, alpha!jonathan, omega!nancy, adult content, embarrassing boners.

Vorfreude

Chapter One

In a world where strong emotion and traumatic experiences could sometimes trigger one to present, she supposed it was a forgone conclusion that Jonathan Byers was going to present as *something*, early or not.

Eighteen to twenty-three was the age of majority for the Alpha, Beta or Omega gene. At least according to the last study she could find in the library. But when Jonathan showed up at school one Monday, snarling and drenched in rut-sweat, it felt a whole lot like the faculty took its first free breath in months. Like all this time, they'd just been *waiting* for something to happen.

It was a couple weeks after everything that'd happened. After they'd found Will and Eleven had- *well*- she didn't like to think about it, honestly. She'd been by her locker grabbing her books for homeroom, still feeling Barb's absence as keen as ever when a sudden scent - harsh like a lightning strike, but somehow just as mesmerizing - made the hair on the back of her neck prickle into points.

He hadn't been far behind.

She was already looking for him - just knowing he'd be there

somehow - when he turned the corner and staggered against the wall. Dark eyes finding hers as he hunched over, plastered to the wall like it was the only thing keeping him upright. His hair was wild with sweat-strings and pillow-stale. T-shirt stuck clear to his chest, almost translucent with fever-wet. Everything about him wrong and trembling save for the delicate bunch of pale pink cotton he had clutched in his fist.

Her sweater.

Oh.

She must have left it in his car after he'd driven her home on Friday.

She hadn't even realized it was missing.

There were people ringed around them that she was aware of only distantly. Drawing a whispering, fluctuating crowd as the teachers echoed loud sounds up and down the halls. Sounds that made their lips warp and pull. But none of that mattered now. None of that had ever mattered. Because he was here. He needed her. He wanted-

The sharp of her teeth plushed tension across her lower lip. Something deep in her belly warming when he staggered forward a conflicted half-step. Chest rising and falling far too fast as he panted. Highlighting the sheen of sweat trickling down from his temples as the growing bulge in the crotch of his jeans displayed itself proudly. Painfully hard with pre-cum already spreading a dark patch beside the zipper.

Alpha.

She didn't understand it then, but something in her chest just *gave* somehow.

Condensing.

Re-shaping.

Wanting.

She was about to say something - *anything*. To have his name leave

her throat like a croon. To go to him. To make it right. Desperately trying to reach something that wasn't quite ready to surface before Sheriff Hopper was suddenly there. Sidling in front of her and blocking her view as another officer started reeling her backwards and away.

She didn't want to go, but no one was listening.

Or maybe she forgot to say the words aloud.

The ones that were screaming inside her head.

She couldn't seem to make sense of it.

Everything was backwards.

Thick.

Charged.

She caught glimpses of the rest through the curve of Officer Callahan's elbow. Jonathan baring his teeth at Sheriff Hopper. Jonathan mangling the syllables of her name and making to follow her before the Sheriff grabbed him by the scruff of his neck and growled. Getting right up in his face, scent high and dominant. Alpha to alpha. Forcing his compliance until the rut-haze backed off enough that her Jonathan - the one she knew so well underneath all the hormones and confusion - blinked up at him, feverish and uncertain.

The last thing she saw before they pulled her around the corner and out of sight was Jonathan crumpling forward into the Sheriff's arms. Exhausted or maybe just seeking comfort as the older Alpha murmured soothingly. Filling the space with that soothing Alpha-thrum people always talked about. A sound that was supposed to make you feel calm and safe, before swinging him up onto a waiting stretcher as the crowd around them scattered. Half-trampling her pink sweater left abandoned on the floor like the worst kind of metaphor.

Then the AFEA, the Agency for Emerging Alphas came with their streamlined vans and acrid too-strong Alpha smells and took him

away. And there was nothing they could do about it.

The explanation Joyce got - and her second hand as she rattled over on her bike the second she heard about the convoy rocketing through town - was that it was as much for his protection as it was for theirs. Newly presented Alphas were unpredictable and dangerous. They needed to be taught how to control their instincts, their reactions to them and everything else that came with being an Alpha in a static environment before being allowed back into society.

It wasn't anything new on the scheme of things. Everyone and their dog knew that much. One of the neighbor's kids had the same thing happen to her when she presented a couple years ago. But it was the fact that it was personal this time that made all the difference.

Jonathan was *hers*.

Her friend.

Her-

She came soaring over the embankment and into the front yard, faster than she'd dared to go in years, just in time to see one of them stick Jonathan with a syringe when he turned back towards the house. Refusing to go with them as two thick-set Alphas kept Joyce firmly on the porch.

She *yelled*. Stumbling off her bike and tasting salt as the pedals grazed her shins. Maybe it was his name. Maybe it was just a sound. Either way, the damage was done. All she knew was that he found her there. Even when a wall of people stepped in to separate them, keeping her back as he started to fall, crumpling slow into the long grass. Something pulling suffocatingly tight in her chest when he growled weakly. Hissing his defiance as a woman with a clipboard popped her gum and scribbled on her clipboard excitedly.

She didn't get to say goodbye. None of them did. Because as soon as the sedative took him under they whisked him away on a cushioned gurney. Stripping him down to his underwear with thoughtless insensitivity. Folding his clothes. His wallet. His shoes. Everything she figured made up a person in such a situation into neat, sterile

little bags that were tagged and recorded right in front of their eyes.

Not even the Sheriff could do anything when he turned up. Wheels kicking up a trail of dust as Joyce broke free of the two Alphas keeping her hostage on her own porch and went to him – streaking his uniform with her tears. It was like a giant, faceless section of the government had just up and swallowed him whole.

She didn't sleep that night.

Or the one after.

The third night all she saw on the inside of her eyelids was the whites of his eyes and the flare of his hair as he'd whirled. Animally-wounded as the syringe of milky sedative hushed into the long grass at his feet. Staring in betrayal at his own limbs as they started to give. Turning sluggish and slow as the scent of his first rut dampened down into a rich, salted caramel that seemed to be coated on the inside of her sinuses, her skin, even her clothes. Clinging to her like a reminder.

She camped out in the library for a couple days after that. Reading up on everything she could get her hands on when it came to the laws surrounding newly presented Alphas. Even forcing Steve to help. But in the end, there was nothing legally they could do. The AFEA had the right to hold all newly presented Alphas for at least three months. No visits. No phone calls. *Nothing*.

Eventually she got Sheriff Hopper to explain it to her. Still absolutely determined that there had to be *something*. She should be allowed to talk to him at least? Send him a letter? Anything? *Right?* Wrong. The Sheriff had been through the AFEA's program himself and he told her flat out and tired - smelling like Joyce's salt-tears and stale cigarettes - that it was more a military recruitment center than anything else. The perfect staging ground to mold each and every Alpha that passed through their doors into a weapon that could be made useful. And, honestly, usually to great success. Most Alpha's excelled in combat roles and high stress environments. It fit their tempers and kept their instincts sharp. A bored Alpha was a dangerous Alpha. Everyone

knew that.

But that wasn't Jonathan.

Jonathan might be an Alpha now, but he wasn't like that.

He wasn't like *them*.

And sure enough, at the end of the mandatory three months, she got a phone call. Realizing in retrospect that apparently all she'd been waiting on this entire time was to hear his voice again.

She did everything he asked her to do on the phone. She picked up the scent blocking candles from the store and burned them every day for at least three hours up to a week before he was due home. She took what felt like five showers and scrubbed until her skin glowed pink. She did everything he asked and more. She wasn't exactly sure why but she brushed her hair until it was somewhere *beyond* soft. Hearing Barb's warm tease in the back of her mind as she decided on and promptly abandoned a dozen different blouses and at least half as many skirts.

But still, nothing compared to the moment she actually saw him.

She caught her breath when he stepped inside the house. Unable to tear her eyes away as she went over every detail. Committing it all to memory so that even if they came back with their suits, excuses and thick, metal-plated vans she would still have *this* – this moment and all its richness - to keep her warm.

Everything about him was new. He was taller. Or at least he *looked* taller. And he was- not bigger, but defined. Like someone had taken his natural leanness and delineated it. It reminded her of the shading on a picture, as if someone had spent the last three months giving him a new dimension. Even his hair was cut short. Swept to the side and angled up to follow the lines of his face. With the soft feathers of a few half-hearted curls hazing around his temples like they had the energy to go anywhere. Highlighting the shape of his eyes and the pale of his skin and turning it striking. Something in her just knowing

that if Carol could see him now, she'd probably be singing a different tune as far as Jonathan was concerned.

It suited him.

That was the hardest part to swallow.

Just like the soft, long black coat he was lost in. Hands shoved deep in his pockets in a way that only highlighted the trench-lined buttons and the teasing glimpse of a cream-colored turtle neck underneath. It was like someone had gone to the most expensive store in the state and bought him the best you could buy off the rack without him there to turn them down. She wondered if he'd even had a choice. If all those neat little bags they'd put his clothes in had just been for show. Or if he'd been able to fit into them at all after the three months were over.

The clothes weren't him, but she was surprised to realize that someday they could be.

She supposed it was a lot like getting used to being an Alpha.

It was something you had to grow into first.

For a long time they just stood there. Reacquainting themselves with each other. He didn't say anything about the fact that she couldn't seem to find the right words. And in turn, she politely pretended not to notice that he hadn't stopped taking shuddering inhales. Scenting her and the air between them in a way that translated into a parched man guzzling water after surviving the worse kind of desert.

And maybe he had, in a way.

Maybe, in another way – a *different* way – she had too.

Because in spite of everything she still found ways to recognize him.

The subtle lowering of his eyes whenever he figured she was looking too close.

The intense stare.

The high flare of his shoulders, knotted up and tense like a bird of prey waiting to strike.

He was still there.

Still the same.

Despite all the newness.

Her mouth was dry. She realized that only when she tried to speak and didn't get anywhere with it. Instead she angled her head towards the stairs. Wordlessly grateful when he juttied a nod and toed off his boots – new, expensive black leather creaking - without undoing the laces. Following her up the stairs, close and quiet in a way that made her self-conscious of the flare of her pastel-blue skirt and the little lace bows on her brand new ankle socks.

It wasn't until they were safely in her room with the door closed and the right words still not coming that she threw caution to the wind and hugged him. Wrapping her arms around his neck so tight that there wasn't a part of him that wasn't touching her. Closing her eyes into it as she tried understand how this moment was different, how it *felt* different, from any other time they'd done this. Because it was. It was different just as much as it was the same. It was a hallmark all on its own and she didn't know if-

He grunted like she'd hurt him. Taking her weight like it was nothing, but so tense and unyielding that for a long moment, she nearly pulled away. It wasn't until she made a soft sound into his shoulder, half a question, half a plead, that he finally started to relax. Burying his face into the split-end fuzz of her hair and puffing into her neck like he was reacquainting himself with the scent. And maybe he was. Everything was probably still really strange for him. Even after three months. She knew it didn't measure up, but she'd done her homework. Alphas were a mess of instinctive drives and strong emotion that could rise up like a flash-fire at a moment's notice. They were territorial. Scent driven. Aggressive. And when they were in rut, once a year in the spring unless their Omega was in heat – they were all those things notched up to a thousand.

Still, he was warm like this.

Familiar.

They wavered in place in the middle of her bedroom. Neither of them making any effort to pull away and put some space between them. Touched starved in an entirely different way than Eleven had been. This was personalized. Like his absence had been a wound on her insides that was finally knitting itself back together.

But of course, it didn't last.

She sucked in a breath of surprise when something firmed against her thigh. Damning and velvet-strong through the thin of his trousers as she bit her lip and froze in place. Hazing towards a boiling flare of second-hand embarrassment when she realized – probably the same moment he did - that he was hard.

He pulled away, stumbling. Cheeks stained patchy red as his eyes narrowed into angry slits.

She didn't know how, but *that* was when she found the words.

"No!" she murmured, taking a step forward as part of him seemed to curl in on himself. "Please don't go. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have."

But he cut her off, shaking his head as he chewed on the inside of his cheek until it glowed pale and bloodless.

"Don't. You have nothing to be sorry about. It's me," he hissed, letting the end part drop like a slur as he clenched his hands into brutal fists. "I'm not in control yet. I mean, I am, but with you- with you it's different. It's-"

She didn't know what that meant but something in her wailed caution. Enough for her to keep the space that remained between them and angle them back towards more familiar territory.

"Are you okay? Did you treat you alright? ...We tried. *I tried*. But they wouldn't even let me write you a letter," she said in a rush, temporarily reliving the last few months like they were sped up. The speed making her queasy as she remembered all those nights not sleeping. All those days riding her bike down that same road just to see the Sheriff's patrol car parked in front of Joyce's like a quiet

sentry. All that time at the library. Worrying.

"I know," he rasped quietly. Eyes downcast and distant like he was remembering something too before looking up again. Following her lead as they sat down on the side of the bed. Legs brushing every other breath.

"I missed you," she admitted, watching him through the fan of her lashes as a muscle in his cheek jumped. Flexing like words unsaid before-

"I missed you too," he answered. Simple. But with weight like he meant it. Enough that the metal vise in her chest eased a bit when she smiled.

It was a good feeling.

A/N:

Thank you for reading, please let me know what you think. – There will be one more chapter, stay tuned.

Reference:

* "Vorfrende" is: A German untranslatable word defined as the intense euphoric sensation you experience from thinking about future plans and daydreams. This beautiful feeling is a natural reaction the human mind manifests from expectations of future pleasures and joyful anticipations, such as planning a trip, going on a date, and many other fulfilling, life-changing events.

2. Chapter 2

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Vorfreude

Chapter Two

He'd been home a week when she found him in the parking lot after school, waiting for her. She smiled when she saw him, leaning against the side of his car with awkward casualness. Collar up and hands shoved deep in his pockets in a way that was so *him* it nearly made her homesick with the distance. There was something on his face that made asking questions useless, so instead of asking where they were going she simply nodded and slipped into the passenger side. Feeling a twinge of guilt as Steve watched silently a couple meters away. Doing nothing to stop her, but not looking happy about it either as they pulled onto the main road.

Not that she blamed him.

A lot of things had changed since they'd taken Jonathan away.

Her and Steve were just one of them.

It wasn't until they were out of town and angling towards the back roads, no destination in mind other than just driving, that he finally started talking.

"I'm going to do it Nancy. What they want? I've thought about it and-well, I can pay off the house in just a few years instead of having that hanging over mom's head all the time. Even start a bank account for

Will to go to university. They've already told me they'll pay for mine- no matter what I want to do. Some sort of stupid Alpha perk to keep up the stereotypes, I guess. Assholes. But you don't have to buy into it. I figured it out. You can use it and try to do something worthwhile. Something that matters. Either way, I can't be here right now," he admitted, inhaling throatily before his hands curled like claws around the steering wheel. "At least not until-"

But he cut himself off before he could finish. Shaking his head like he'd said something he'd promised himself he wouldn't. Watching her guiltily before something in the bushes on the side of the road caught his attention. His heightened senses giving him enough warning to start a gentle brake long before a herd of deer hopped out from the treeline and streaked across the road. Watching silently until all but the buck, mature, large and snorting up steam in the glow of the headlights paused to eye them down.

She barely noticed. Hands clenched so tight around the edges of her seat she swore she could feel the bones creaking. Turning a sickly, bloodless pale as he started up again. Feeling the throb of her pulse between her ears as honest disappointment turned into something far more serious than it should have been.

"Besides, they can't put me in active duty or anything until I'm of age. I think they want me for surveillance anyway. I told them about my camera and they seemed to think they could make something work with that. So it wouldn't be that bad, right? And if it is, I'll-I'll just get out. They can't force me to-"

It was honestly the last thing she expected him to say after all those months apart that for a long smattering of beats everything was just blank. Static. *Dark*. Like it'd been in the upside down. Where everything had been just a little bit off. A little bit wrong. A little bit...*other*.

"Nancy?"

The growing dark seemed to press in. Fitting into all the cracks and hollows of her as he watched her through the fall of his hair. The tendons in his throat angular and highlighted. Almost like he was holding himself back from saying something else. Something that

would change everything. Something-

"Nancy?"

"Take me home Jonathan," she whispered.

She saved her tears until he dropped her off at home and the night swallowed his tail-lights. Thinking about the kid who'd been given a borrowed gun on his birthday and the weight of his father's expectations. The same kid who hadn't been able to pull the trigger on a rabbit without regretting it.

He sent her photographs in the mail every couple of months without any writing on them.

She never replied but she kept everyone in a shoe box lined with forest green tissue paper underneath her bed. Spreading them out across the comforter whenever she felt his absence too much. Finding herself smiling more than once as she traced the angles of an unfamiliar stretch of road. A woman's face obscured in a haze of orange-red as her hair billowed in front of her face with a gust of wind. The world-hugging curve of the Hoover Dam settled between the sides of a rocky canyon. A sign riddled with rust a bullet holes. A man with a buzz-cut and a bronze whistle trapped between his teeth captured in mid-blow. Ice-capped mountains looming in the distance across a grassy field. A small boy with a wide, gap-toothed smile looking at something outside of the frame. Jonathan's worn boots and an empty pointed cartridge tucked into the pleats like a good luck charm.

"Sometimes, people don't really say what they're really thinking. But you capture the right moment...it says more."

The only time they really had together was a two week period around Christmas. He came home every year at the same time and every minute he wasn't at home with his mom and brother, he was with her.

She hoarded every minute greedily. Painfully aware that time was a

ticking clock waiting to separate them. She never asked him to stay. She knew him better than that. But every year she hoped it would be the last. That this year it would be different and he'd come home for good. Even though there was a ghost in the back of her head who sounded suspiciously like Steve and bitterness, that asked why she was bothering to wait on someone who only ever ran away on her.

Then one day, just before the start of summer, she woke up to find her sheets wrapped around her ankles and a fever burning under her skin. To the inner of her thighs wet with slick and Jonathan's name on her tongue as she cried out again and again. Screaming for something she didn't know how to put into words until her mother was suddenly there and holding her. Unable to sooth her with her steady Beta scent as part of her slowly started to understand.

He came home before Christmas that year.

She wasn't sure how he knew, maybe Joyce had told him she'd presented just after her nineteenth birthday. Or maybe something else had brought him back before the Christmas holiday. The how and why of it didn't matter. Because one day, just before the end of summer, she was on the field cleaning up after Holly's soccer game when she heard the grate of a familiar engine.

She smiled to herself as she stacked the orange pylons and waved goodbye to the rest of the team. Telling the coach she'd clean up the rest - earn her summer job for a change - as the last of the players and their families streamed off in the direction of the parking lot.

The next time she looked up he was there. Standing in front of her like a gentle road-block she hadn't decided what to do with yet. Just like she knew he would be. Expression a mess of guarded, hopeful, hungry and warm with that same salted-caramel scent rising off him in spreading waves.

She was able to detect the layers this time.

The details and intricacies that had been hidden from her before she'd presented.

And he smelled like- *hers*.

Home.

His nostrils flared like the realization had been shared aloud. Chuffing deep in his throat like recognition as pleasure pooled in her belly. Rising like warm water on the cusp of spilling over the lip of a tub before answering with a pitchy Omegan keen that made him close his eyes and inhale like nothing in his life had ever prepared himself for such a thing.

And she wasn't much better. Realizing in a spiked, adrenaline-fueled rush that he *hadn't* been running after all. Not really. In fact, all this time he'd just been waiting. Waiting on her. And now he was here and hers and honestly she could barely-

"You're mine," she said wonderingly, knowing it in that way every Omega does. Unexplainable and vibrant as she took one step then another. Eating up the space between them bit by bit until her head was under his chin and she was half curled around him. Knowing that even now, when it came to this, it would always have to be her that made the first move.

For a long moment they just breathed together. Getting acquainted with the possibilities of what happened next as he nosed into her neck affirmingly. Scenting her, probably just like he'd always wanted to. Sweet and careful enough everywhere else that the slow drag of his teeth down the pale of her throat a moment later caught her off guard and trembling.

Only she didn't pull away.

Instead, she *whimpered*.

He scented arousal then. Enough to drown her. A surge of pent up want and need and maybe even aggression as every part of him screamed. Bottled up and tense with his new senses – new instincts, drives and needs. Holding himself back from claiming her right there in the middle of the field by the skin of his teeth.

But just like always, there was a part of him that would always be

boldly that.

Him.

"I've always been yours," he replied softly. Looking down at her in that serious way he had as the wind picked up. Ruffling the dark feathers of his hair, making him look a whole lot like that quiet, serious boy he'd been not that long ago. The one she'd slowly fallen in love with without even knowing.

She'd never heard anything in her life that made the most and least sense than those four words. But since they were hers - gifts he'd given her - she didn't hesitate to press her lips against his and take their first kiss for her very own.

It was a start.

And more than anything, *that* was what she believed in.

A/N: Thank you for reading, please let me know what you think. – This story is now complete.